

More Workers Reporting Pension Coverage 1995 - 1999

To derive these estimates, PWBA tabulated household responses to a biennial Census Bureau survey on contingent employment, which asks workers about “pension or retirement” plans. Measuring pension coverage with precision is difficult. Surveyed workers may fail to provide accurate information on their pensions. The limited, narrow questions used in this survey are likely to understate pension coverage somewhat relative to the more thorough surveys that revealed flat coverage rates between 1972 and 1993. A precise measure of changes in coverage since 1993 is not yet available. Nonetheless, these findings suggest that coverage may be increasing. To read the full report which contains these facts as well as further analysis and details of source data, please see “Coverage Status of Workers Under Employer Provided Pension Plans”, which can be found under Publications at the DOL/PWBA website <www.dol.gov/dol/pwba>.

- ★ Pension coverage has begun to edge up. In 1999, 44% of private employees reported participating in a “pension or retirement plan,” up from 41% in 1995 (see table).
- ★ Although coverage is increasing in general, the coverage for certain groups including women, minorities, low wage workers and employees of small firms is still lagging. The Retirement Savings Education Campaign will continue to concentrate its educational efforts with these groups to work toward broader coverage.
- ★ The increase in pension coverage is broad based, affecting full and part time workers, employees of small and large firms, men and women, whites and minorities.

- ★ The level of increase in pension coverage was generally smaller within various earnings groups.
- ★ Coverage edged up slightly among both workers earning less than \$500 per week and those earning more. The overall coverage rate was also boosted by movement of more workers to higher pay levels, where coverage is more common.
- ★ The proportion of full-time, private-sector workers reporting coverage grew from 48% in 1995 to 51% in 1999, while part-time workers’ coverage grew from 12% to 14%.

Private-Sector Employees	% covered in 1995	% covered in 1999
All workers	41%	44%
Full-time	48%	51%
Part-time	12%	14%
Earning < \$500/week	25%	26%
Earning \$500+/week	63%	65%
At firms w/ <100 employees*	20%	24%**
At firms w/ 100+ employees*	53%	55%**
Men	44%	47%
Women	38%	40%
White	44%	47%
Hispanic	39%	41%
Asian or Pacific Islander	36%	38%
Black	24%	27%

*Derived from different data; understated relative to other estimates presented.

**Data for 1998.

- ★ Coverage at small firms* with fewer than 100 employees increased from 20% to 24%**, while that at larger firms rose from 53% to 55%**.
- ★ Men’s coverage grew from 44% to 47%, while women’s coverage grew from 38% to 40%.